

Animal

Animal Control Officer Faces Dismissal

By PAULA MAXWELL

Town Manager Rocco Longo and Police Chief Mark DeLuca will officiate at an administrative hearing today which could result in the official dismissal of Animal Control Officer Haley Dee Parlin.

Parlin has been embroiled in controversy over conditions at the animal shelter and conflicts with town management. She was hired by Longo for the job four and a half years ago.

Neither DeLuca nor Longo immediately returned phone calls seeking comment on the matter.

Parlin said Monday that she was called into DeLuca's office

last week and told she was being placed on administrative leave pending a hearing at the police department. The animal control officer said she was told to leave town.

Parlin said she had to turn over her town ID card, vehicle and keys to the town as well as her cell phone.

Asst. Animal Control Officer Matt Riggins said he was told to take over her duties pending the hearing.

Parlin said Tuesday she heard "through the grapevine" that plans were in place to terminate her position all together.

Paul Bruce, who used to assist Parlin as a volunteer at

continued on page 35

Animal Officer Faces Dismissal

continued from page one

the shelter, told the *Clipper* that Parlin was being fired unfairly. Recently he was charged with a misdemeanor involving picking up dogs and taking them to the shelter against police orders restrict the activity.

"She blew the whistle on several things with the state and feds and she tried to join the union. They didn't like that," he said. "It's a lightning rod position."

Bruce said that Parlin reported conditions at the shelter to state authorities who undertook an investigation of the animal shelter issuing a report that angered Longo.

Robert Prezioso, Director of the Mass. Division of Occupational Safety confirmed that an investigation of shelter conditions in Duxbury was undertaken by state environmental hygiene engineer Kenneth Ridlon following receipt of a complaint. He said the town received a report of the inves-



tigation August 8 listing a number of violations following the inspection. He said the town responded August 20 with an



Conditions at the town animal shelter have been an ongoing source of controversy. Fundraising efforts are under way for construction of a new shelter.

architectural schematic showing plans for a new animal shelter and listed several steps taken to address building issues.

Parlin herself admits that the conditions at the animal shelter "got away from me" but attributes it to lack of help from DPW and an injury she endured on the job.

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**-Haley Parlin
Animal Control Officer**

Asked about an alleged altercation last week with Animal Shelter Fundraising Chairman Ann Eldridge, Parlin said, "She wanted me to pass out flyers to

collect donations for the shelter and I told her by order of the town manager that my job wouldn't allow me to do that."

Parlin said that Eldridge grabbed her arm and that she raised her voice to her but did not retaliate.

Eldridge told the *Clipper* that she had received permission from Town Clerk Nancy Oates to post the flyers at the Animal Shelter and that, "Our whole campaign is based on the conditions at the shelter. It is critical that we post fundraising flyers there," she said.

When Parlin refused to listen to her she said, "I merely put my fingers on her sleeve and said, 'Haley, please look at me and talk to me.'"

Parlin said that "complaints go with the job" but that she feels she is the scapegoat for the mess associated with the shelter conditions and lack of improvements which have lagged for reasons not associated with her. She also said that she has not had a conversation with

Longo in over a year.

Private donations amounting to over \$40,000 have been in the fund for over four years and no new shelter has yet been acted on.

Parlin said she will get an attorney and not stand by idly in the face of dismissal.

"The percentage of dogs running loose has decreased and the number of licenses taken out has increased. All I did was my job and try to enforce the law."

Resident Marilyn Phillips who is affiliated with Standish Humane Society was highly critical of Parlin's performance as animal control officer and accused her of trapping and disposing of stray cats over the years, among other things.

"She uses vets out of town so people won't find out. She said it's because it's cheaper. Who knows what goes on," she said. Phillips was also highly critical of Longo and DeLuca saying they have failed to respond to letters from her and others complaining about shelter conditions and lack of record keeping there.

"The whole matter is a sham, a mishandled mess," she said.